

10 ESSENTIAL QUESTIONS

The following questions need to be answered for an institution to support a library or a room with reading materials:

1. **Who are the primary users? Other users?**
2. **What types of materials will be available?**
3. **What space is available? Is the space sufficient to house the desired materials? What are the space requirements?**
4. **What materials and services are available from local public libraries, synagogue libraries, day school, or community libraries? What materials and services do not need to be duplicated by your institution?**
5. **How will materials be acquired?**

If purchased new: What is the annual budget? Who will select the materials? Who will order, label, process, and catalog the material?

If materials are acquired by donation: Who will decide what to keep and what to discard? What will be done to dispose of unwanted materials?

6. **How will the collection of materials be organized so that people can find what they are looking for?**
7. **How will materials be checked in and out? How will missing titles be identified and located?**
8. **How will borrowers find the materials they want? Who will be there to help borrowers find the materials they want?**
9. **When will the library be open? When will the library be staffed? Who will train the volunteers?**
10. **Who will be responsible for ordering equipment and supplies, including those needed on an on-going basis?**

If there is institutional support for a **FUNCTIONING LIBRARY**, the following additional issues need to be addressed:

- **Develop a job description for a salaried, professional (MLS) librarian, at least part-time.**
- **Gain approval for a yearly library budget from institutional operating funds.**
- **Institute a dedicated space for the library.**

TIPS FOR STARTING A NEW LIBRARY

1. Form a library committee consisting of institutional decision-makers, volunteers, and residents. Meaningful planning requires the participation of stake holders; plans should be made by consensus to ensure support.
2. In addition to getting advice about space planning from the project architect, sales representatives from library furnishing and equipment vendors will estimate shelving and seating needs and show you what is available.
3. The current average price of an adult hardcover book is \$26 for fiction and \$76 for non-fiction. Adult paperbacks average \$17 for fiction and \$39 for non-fiction. Hardcover children's books average \$19; children's paperbacks average \$9. Keep these figures in mind when determining your book budget. Also, be sure to include allocations for supplies (stamps, pockets, cards, labels, office supplies, etc.), subscriptions, professional dues, photocopying and mailing costs, programs, professional development (local and national conferences and workshops), and other expenses in the budget.
4. Become a member of the Association of Jewish Libraries and get involved with your local chapter, if available. Yearly AJL dues for at least one staff member should be written into the budget and covered by the institution. Visit the AJL website at www.jewishlibraries.org for membership information, a list of AJL publications, the AJL Bibliography Bank, Chapter contact information, and more!
5. Download the AJL Accreditation applications from the website. Make Accreditation a goal for your library.